

THE RAND CORPORATION

February 22, 1988

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
President
The Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I found your letter of February 12 concerning my RAND Report, "The Strategic Nuclear Debate" both interesting and quite useful.

In replying, first let me comment on your initial botherment about slotting of individuals into schools of thought. This has been a problem both with the Reports in this series and with my earlier book, "The Arms Debate". My defense is that I have specified that the range of views is a spectrum and the cutting into schools is necessarily arbitrary. Except perhaps for those like Albert who have actually generated the ideas I have used to define the schools, I would expect individuals to draw from more than one. You state that p.85 comes close to your view; since p.85 is a statement of my own views, perhaps we can join one another in being eclectic.

Coincidentally, your letter came just as I was completing the draft of the enclosed chapter, which discusses "Discriminate Deterrence". To place the chapter in context, it is the penultimate summary of my new book, "Still the Arms Debate", succeeding the NATO portion which in turn follows the strategic nuclear piece you have commented on. (The final chapter discusses policy as such, rather than the debate.) I would recommend taking seriously the first sentence, and skipping to p.14 which starts the discussion of DD, particularly since I have not yet put some important charts into the draft. To provide some jargon definitions you will need, however, the "Active Middle" is the name I give to the school that crosses all segments of the arms debate (the Third World, strategic nuclear, and NATO), favoring an active American policy of maneuver and optimization (e.g., continued use of Contra pressure in Nicaragua as well as controlled deterrence.) The "Reactive Middle" is dubious about our ability to optimize and fears the attempt (let Arias solve Nicaragua, existential deterrence.) The "Disengagers/Disarmers" want to get away from worldwide nuclear and other commitments.

You will note, incidentally, that toward the end of the first paragraph on p.15, I did in fact treat your own views as being eclectic. If you think my statement is inaccurate, it can, of course, be changed. My selfish reason for sending you the chapter is to get other comments while I can still take account of them.

Dr. Joshua Lederberg

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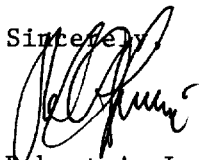
In any case, I will let the several pages stand on their own; I can summarize them by saying that in my view, DD does take a clear (and well-reasoned) stand on some controversial issues in the debate. My views, in partial disagreement, will be in my final chapter.

On the specific points in your letter, however:

- o Albert has ALWAYS stressed non-nuclear options; for the last twenty years, he has specifically stressed high-tech conventional alternatives. Since the quote from him on p.21 which you liked, makes clear that he surely considers anything nuclear as a last resort, there is nothing inconsistent about this. Nonetheless, his last resort, in contrast to Bundy and McNamara's, does end up with controlled nuclear options, and my reading is that this is also the stand of DD, as in the portions I quote in the enclosed chapter.
- o The fact that "DD is relatively silent on arms control" is in itself indicative of a viewpoint. A parallel Bundy/McNamara/Halperin document would have centered on arms control. I was going to say something like this in my description of DD, but decided not to because arms control IS mentioned and it's tough to cite that sort of negative. If you would give me permission, however, I should like to use the above-quoted sentence from your letter in this chapter.
- o I do agree with your final paragraph on "MAD versus defense spending." Not inconsistent with this, I think the next decade of debate is going to focus on the question of how radically the Soviet Union is really changing, and how this should affect our policies. I also agree with DD, however -- and I think this is one of its major values -- that in the next century the questions themselves may be quite different.

Thank you for your letter. In addition to any further comments you have, I'd like very much to visit you and talk further one of the next times I come East, or perhaps when you come West. RAND would be delighted to pull together a discussion group should you be interested in presenting a few informal remarks.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Levine
Director
National Security Strategies Program
Project Air Force